

AN APACHE LIFE-WAY

[604] position of stepmother to these youngsters.¹¹ Her very closeness
[587] to her sister, the fact that these girls have played and worked to-
[595] gether since childhood, establishes her interest in the develop-
ment of her sister's children. The chances are that she will per-

[43] form protective ceremonies for them, that she will give them
[574] food and presents, that they will be frequent visitors in her home,
and that she will offer them economic assistance in times of need.

[881] At the puberty rite of her sister's daughter, she will give gen-
[584] erously of her labor and provisions. When her niece is about to
marry, she will doubtless act as one of the group of relatives who
passes on the desirability of the union; she will help erect the
dwelling to which the husband will be brought; and she may

[583] furnish household necessities. When her nephew marries, her
household will contribute to the gifts to be presented to his

[868] bride's relatives. The degree to which she participates in the in-
struction of her sister's children will vary with her own proficien-
cy. If she knows a great deal about the medicinal value of plants,
it is quite likely that she will transmit that information to her
sister's daughter as well as to her own girls.

[591] Somewhat different are the relations between the child and the
mother's brother, for he resides with the extended domestic
family only until he marries. If he is considerably younger than
the mother, he may be around during the entire childhood of the
individual; if he is older or near her age, he may depart while the
child is yet very young. But even after he leaves the encamp-

[574] ment through marriage, he frequently visits his parental home.

At first, to his wife's relatives, he is a stranger and an unproved
acquisition. He is bound to many of them by obligations of

[596] avoidance, restraint, and economic assistance, but the warmer
[602] bonds of kinship and prolonged common residence are lacking.

• [851] Therefore, until he has children of his own and his status among
his wife's relatives is established, he is likely to keep in closest
touch with his own blood kin. There is a good deal of restraint

[601] ¹¹ When a woman marries her deceased sister's husband or becomes her sister's
co-wife, the stepmother term may be used as a self-reciprocal between her sister's
children and herself, or the mother's sister term may be continued. The first is
the more common practice.